

Frequently Asked Questions about Backyard Chickens in Residential Districts



- Aberdeen City Council passed Ordinance No. 20-O-08 allowing chickens in residential districts on July 27, 2020 with an effective date of August 17, 2020.
- Residential zoning districts are R-1, R-2, R-O, and R-3. The Aberdeen Zoning Map indicating all residentially zoned districts is attached for your use. If you live in a residentially zoned area within the City of Aberdeen, you can have chickens other than roosters or cockerels for household use or as household pets with the following provisions:
 1. The number of chickens that may be kept on any lot will not exceed 6 chickens for each one-half acre or portion of one-half acre of lot area.
 2. The lot where the chickens are being kept will be fenced to prevent chickens from leaving the lot.
 3. A protective coop will be maintained on the lot to shelter the chickens.
 4. The “coop” means an enclosed accessory structure that houses chickens for nesting and shelter.
 5. The coop will be made of one or more of these materials: lumber, composite materials, or brick.
 6. The roof of the coop will be made of one or more of these materials: treated lumber, metal roof paneling, or roofing shingles.

7. The coop will be at least 3 square feet per the number of chickens kept on the lot and will be in the rear yard with the same setback requirements for an accessory use structure.
8. The setbacks for an accessory structure are 6 feet from the rear lot line, 6 feet from the side lot line, and 6 feet from any other structure (i.e., house or garage) on the lot.
9. The coop must also be kept out of any easements.
10. A building permit is not required for construction or placement of a coop unless the coop exceeds 24 square feet.
11. A building permit will be required for coops that exceed 24 square feet and will be issued by the Aberdeen Department of Planning and Community Development, 60 North Parke Street, Aberdeen, MD 21001.
12. Building permits can be applied for on the Aberdeen website at www.aberdeenmd.gov or in person in the lobby of the Aberdeen Municipal Center. If you have any questions on the building permit requirements contact the Department of Planning and Community Development at (410) 272-1600.
13. The cost of the building permit is \$25.00, and the purpose of the permit is to maintain a local record of residential flocks and for code enforcement purposes.
14. Residents that have chickens are responsible for keeping all chickens confined within their property.
15. Residents will be responsible for all property maintenance violations related to keeping chickens and fines will be assessed if there are any violations of the Property Maintenance Code.
16. Residents will be required to manage, remove, dispose, or otherwise handle chicken manure in such a way that it does not cause environmental harm of any kind.
17. The Maryland Department of Agriculture requires that you register your poultry. The form can be found at <http://www.mda.state.md.us/pdf/poultryregistration>.